

In the Claims

Claim 1 (Previously presented): An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:4 or a nucleic acid sequence fully complementary to SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 2 (Previously presented): An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising SEQ ID NO:4.

Claims 3-5 (Canceled)

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): A method for screening for an autoimmune disease, comprising: providing a sample from a patient suspected of having an autoimmune disease; and screening said sample for over-expression of the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 6, in which said sample comprises RNA and said screening comprises measuring mRNA of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 6, in which said disease is LGL or rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 10 (Canceled)

Claim 11 (Currently amended): A method of producing a recombinant sppr protein which comprises introducing the nucleic acid molecule of ~~claim 1~~ claim 2 into a host to thereby transform said host, cultivating the thus-obtained transformant, and recovering the recombinant sppr protein thus produced.

Claim 12 (Previously presented): An expression vector comprising SEQ ID NO:4 or a nucleic acid sequence fully complementary to SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 13 (Previously presented): A host cell which is transformed with an expression vector comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4 or a nucleic acid sequence fully complementary to SEQ ID NO:4.

Claims 14-16 (Canceled)

Claim 17 (Previously presented): An expression vector comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn): A method for screening for a neurodegenerative disease, comprising: providing a sample from a patient suspected of having a neurodegenerative disease; and screening said sample for over-expression of the nucleic acid molecule of claim 1.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 18, in which said sample comprises RNA and said screening comprises measuring mRNA of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 20 (Canceled)

Claim 21 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 18, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 22 (Previously presented): The host cell of claim 13, wherein said expression vector comprises the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 6, wherein the nucleic acid molecule comprises
SEQ ID NO:4.

Claim 24 (Canceled)